

Message Text

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AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HAMBURG 1124

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GW

SUBJ: CRISIS WITHIN THE HAMBURG SPD/FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT

1. SUMMARY: SIX MONTHS AFTER THE MARCHS3, 1974 HAMBURG STATE ELECTIONS RETURNED THE FORMER SPD/FDP COALITION GOVERNMENT TO POWER SERIOUS DISSENSIONS HAVE SO RENT THE PARTNERSHIP THAT DOUBTS ARE BEGINNING TO GROW WHETHER THE HAMBURG STATE GOVERNMENT CAN HOLD TOGETHER UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION IN 1978. AN IMPASSE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES OVER AN ISSUE INVOLVING THE EMPLOYMENT OF COMMUNIST TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND A DENUNCIATION BY THE SPD SENATOR OF THE INTERIOR OF AN FDP MEMBER OF THE BUERGERSCHAFT AS A "SECURITY RISK" HAVE EXACERBATED THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE TWO PARTIES AND THREATENS TO SPLIT THE COALITION INTO ANTAGONISTIC CAMPS. AN IRREPARABLE SCHISM BETWEEN THE SPD AND THE FDP IS A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY.

2. THE EASY CAMARADERIE THAT MARKED THE RELATIONS OF THE SPD AND THE FDP COALITION PARTNERS IN THE PREVIOUS HAMBURG STATE GOVERNMENT NO LONGER EXISTS. THE BLAME FOR THIS DIVISIVENESS MUST BE

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BORNE BY THE FDP WHOSE PRESENT LEADERSHIP IN THE HAMBURG SENAT AND THE BUERGERSCHAFT IS MUCH MORE TINGED WITH LEFT-WING RADICALISM THAN WAS THE FDP BLOC IN THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. IN THE LAST GOVERNMENT THE FDP WAS ABLY LED IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT AND THE SENAT BY PETER HEINZ MUELLER-LINK, HIS PARTY'S FLOOR LEADER IN THE LOWER HOUSE, AND BY HANS RAU, THE PARTY'S SECOND MAYOR IN HAMBURG. BOTH MUELLER-LINK AND RAU WORKED HARMONIOUSLY WITH THE SPD LEADERSHIP IN THE CITY-STATE GOVERNMENT BUT BOTH WERE CONSTANTLY AT ODDS WITH THEIR OWN YOUNG DEMOCRATS IN HAMBURG AS WELL AS WITH THE DOMINANT MEMBERS OF THE FDP STATE BOARD WHOSE RADICAL TENDENCIES HAVE PLACED THEM ON THE FAR LEFT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. DURING THE LATTER YEARS OF THE 1970-74 STATE GOVERNMENT, THE MODERATE VIEWS OF MUELLER-LINK AND RAU GRADUALLY ALIENATED THEM FROM THE PREDOMINANTLY MORE RADICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE HAMBURG FDP. THEY BECAME POLITICAL LIABILITIES AND WERE THUS JETTISONED BY THAIR PARTY PRIOR TO THE LAST STATE ELECTIONS IN FAVOR OF CANDIDATES OF A MUCH MORE PINKISH HUE. IN WAS INEVITABLE, THEREFORE, THAT THE FDP REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD RENDER IT LESS POLITICALLY COMPATIBLE WITH THE SPD THAN THE PREVIOUS COALITION OF THE SAME TWO PARTIES.

3. UNTIL RECENTLY THE MINOR DIFFERENCES WHICH OCCASIONALLY CROPPED UP BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTNERS WERE REASONABLY RESOLVED BY A MIXED COMMISSION OF SPD/FDP BUERGERSCHAFT MEMBERS BEFORE THEY REACHED THE FLOOR OF THE LOWER HOUSE. HOWEVER, TWO ISSUES, WHICH THE MIXED COMMISSION COULD NOT RECONCILE, HAVE CREATED FISSURES IN THE COALITION AND HAVE THEREBY SERIOUSLY STRAINED AS WELL PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SPD FIRST MAYOR, PETER SCHULZ, AND THE FDP SECOND MAYOR, DIETER BIALLAS. THESE PARTY AND PERSONAL ANTAGONISMS NOW THREATEN THE POLITICAL STABILITY OF THE SPD/FDP COALITION AND, INDEED, THE LIFE OF THE HAMBURG STATE GOVERNMENT.

4. THE ISSUES IN QUESTION ARE:

(A) THE EMPLOYMENT OF RADICALS IN THE HAMBURG CIVIL SERVICE. THE FDP HAS ASSERTED THAT HAMBURG SHOULD NOT BAR THE EMPLOYMENT OF COMMUNIST TEACHERS IN THE HAMBURG PRIMARY SCHOOL SYSTEM. THE SPD IS OPPOSED TO THIS AND HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT THE FDP VIEW IS A QUIXOTIC TOLERATION OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL ELEMENTS WHICH, IF FOLLOWED TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION, COULD

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LEAD TO AN EVENTUAL DOMINATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM BY RADICAL ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT. THE IMPASSE BETWEEN THE COALITION PARTNERS FORCED THE ISSUE INTO THE OPEN AND A VOTE ON THE FLOOR OF THE BUERGERSCHAFT. ON AUGUST 27 A MAJORITY OF THE LOWER HOUSE SOLIDLY VOTED DOWN THE FDP RESOLUTION.

(B) THE DENUNCIATION BY THE SPD SENATOR OF THE INTERIOR OF AN FDP BUERGERSCHAFT MEMBER AS A "SECURITY RISK". SENATOR OF THE INTERIOR HANS KLOSE HAS PUBLICLY CHARGED GERHARD WEBER, THE DEPUTY

FLOOR LEADER OF THE FDP IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT AND HIS PARTY'S DEPUTY CHAIRMAN IN HAMBURG, OF BEING A "SECURITY RISK". WEBER, CHAIRMAN OF THE HAMBURG BRANCH OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, HAS LONG BEEN SUSPECTED OF BEING A COMMUNIST AGENT OR, AT LEAST, A DUPE OF THE SOVIETS. HE HAS BEEN ASSIDUOUSLY CULTIVATED BY MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL HERE IN HAMBURG AND HAS BEEN EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN RECENT YEARS IN COMMUNIST-DOMINATED CULTURAL CIRCLES.

5. ON AUGUST 30 SENATOR OF THE INTERIOR KLOSE PUBLICLY DISCLOSED THAT WEBER'S CONTACTS AND ACTIVITIES WITH PERSONS IN "FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE CIRCLES" HAS MADE HIM A "SECURITY RISK" IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. KLOSE'S CHARGE HAS STUNNED THE FDP LEADERSHIP HERE AND MOVED THE PARTY'S TITULAR LEADER, SECOND MAYOR BIALLAS, TO DEFEND WEBER AT A HASTILY-CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE. BIALLAS, SIGNIFICANTLY, DID NOT REPUDIATE KLOSE'S DENUNCIATION OF WEBER AS A "SECURITY RISK", BUT CONFINED HIS DEFENSE TO A RATHER LAME AND ALMOST IRRELEVANT ASSERTION OF WEBER'S "MORAL INTEGRITY".

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6. AN EXTRA DIMENSION TO KLOSE'S EXPOSE HAS BEEN ADDED BY THE

HANNOVERSCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG WHICH HAS REPORTED THAT FOLLOWING THE MARCH 1974 STATE ELECTIONS AND DURING THE PERIOD IN WHICH THE FDP WAS DELIBERATING ABOUT WHOM TO SELECT AS ITS FLOOR LEADER IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY, KLOSE APPROACHED THE FDP LEADERSHIP AND CAUTIONED THEM ABOUT SELECTING WEBER TO REPRESENT HIS PARTY AS THE FDP FLOOR LEADER IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT. KLOSE WAS ALLEGED TO HAVE ADVISED THE FDP LEADERSHIP THAT THE CUSTOM OF PROVIDING THE FLOOR LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT WITH INFORMATION OF A SECURITY NATURE GATHERED BY THE OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION (ALNDESAMT FUER VERFASSUNGSSCHUTZ) WOULD NOT PREVAIL IN WEBER'S CASE IF THE FDP SELECTED HIM AS THEIR PARTY'S FLOOR LEADER.

7. THIS INTERVENTION BY THE SPD IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THEIR JUNIOR COALITION PARTNER WAS CONFIRMED TO ME BY KLOSE DURING A CONVERSATION I HAD WITH HIM ON SEPTEMBER 2. KLOSE'S THREAT TO WITHHOLD LFV SECURITY INFORMATION FROM THE FDP IF WEBER WERE ELECTED HIS PARTY'S FLOOR LEADER LED, OF COURSE, TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SUBSEQUENT ELECTION OF GERHARD MEYER AS THE FDP FLOOR LEADER IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT. THE WEBER SOLUTION WAS, HOWEVER, RELATIVELY SHORT-LIVED. NOW THAT KLOSE HAS PUBLICLY EXPOSED HIM AS A "SECURITY RIS" THE RECRIMINATIONS HURLED BY THE COALITION PARTNERS AGAINST EACH OTHER HAVE CAUSED A GENUINE GOVERNMENT CRISIS WHOSE ULTIMATE SOLUTION - IF ANY - MAY WELL LEAD TO A SESSION OF HEAD BANGING OF THE HAMBURG SPD/FDP LEADERSHIP BY SCHMIDT AND GENSCHER IN BONN.

8. MEETINGS BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND MAYORS TO PATCH UP THE COALITION DIFFERENCES HAVE RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION, BUT MOST OBJECTIVE OBSERVERS HERE AGREE WITH WHAT ALFRED DE CHAPEAUROUGE, THE CDU VICE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY, EXPLAINED TO ME THE OTHER EVENING, TO WIT, THAT THE COALITION IN HAMBURG IS DYING IF NOT ALREADY DEAD. THIS MAY BE THE WISHFUL THINKING OF A PARTISAN MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION, BUT KLOSE HIMSELF ADMITTED THE SAME TO ME IN A LONG DISCUSSION A WEEK AGO. REFLECTING THE SENTIMENTS OF HIS PARTY LEADER, MAYOR PETER SCHULZ, KLOSE TOLD ME THAT THE SPD MUST FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO GO IT ALONE AS A MINORITY GOVERNMENT IN HAMBURG, HOPING, IF A SCHISM DOES DEVELOP, THAT ON VARIOUS ISSUES THE SPD MAY LOOK TO THE CDU FOR LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT.

9. THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY FAR-FETCHED SPD WISHFUL THINKING. JUERGEN ECHTERNACH, CDU FLOOR LEADER IN THE BUERGERSCHAFT, IN PUBLICLY COMMENTING ON THE COALITION CRISIS, HAS STATED THAT THE CDU WOULD BE PREPARED TO TOLERATE AND EVEN TO SUPPORT AN SPD MINORITY GOVERNMENT ON MANY ISSUES IF IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SPD AND THE FDP EVENTUALLY CAUSE AN IRREPARABLE SPLIT IN THE HAMBURG COALITION. OBVIOUSLY, THE SPD

WOULD PREFER TO PRESERVE THE COALITION AND WILL GO MORE THAN
HALF WAY TO RESOLVE ITS CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH ITS JUNIOR PARTNER.
NEVERTHELESS, IT IS INTERESTING AND INDICATIVE OF THE BREADTH
OF THE DIFFERENCES DIVIDING THE COALITION THAT BOTH THE SPD AND
THE CDU HERE ARE EACH SPEAKING VAGUELY, BUT OPENLY, OF POSSIBLE
AD HOC WORKING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE FUTURE.BROGAN

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